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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that women experience two realities, a "private sphere" and a "public sphere," and the implication of this dual perspective needs to be addressed by women scholars in all disciplines. The idea behind these two spheres of reality is traced back to the ancient Greeks where household management (oikos) was the female domain and the public sphere (polis) was the male domain. The sacred center of the oikos was the hearth and hearthfire, governed by the Greek goddess, Hestia, while the public sphere was protected by Hermes. Acknowledging that gender reality may include both spheres, this paper examines: (1) the split consciousness of women; (1) the Hestian archetype as self-defined female essence; (2) the role of language; and (3) the gender-neutral language of systems thinking. An examination of writings on the nature of universities reveals the Hermean perspective, and home economics and women's studies are outside this perspective. Today, universities remain predominately Hermean in perspective and resistant to change, while feminist reconceptualizing of the disciplines is slowly changing the Hermean structure. A 58-item bibliography and three tables are included. (DJC)

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THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY

by

Patricia J. Thompson

Keynote Address. CUNY Women's Coalition Institute
"The Feminization of CUNY."
Solway House, Saugerties, New York
14 June 1988

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THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY

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> We are confronted virtually with the problem of reinventing the world of knowledge, of thought, of symbols and images. Not of course by repudiating everything that has been done but by subjecting it to exact scrutiny and criticism from the position of women as subjects. . . or knower(s).
>
> Dorothy E. Smith
> Ideological Structure and How Women Are Excluded

In a recent article in The New York Times, the CUNY graduate School's eminent historian Gertrude Himmelfarb assailed Stanford and Duke Universities for undercutting "classical values." She counts as a "perversion of the traditional idea of the university and of democracy" the inclusion in the curriculum of "books on non-European cultures, books by 'women, minorities, and persons of color' and at least one work each quarter explicitly addressing the issues of 'race, gender, class'." She writes, "Stanford is instituting affirmative action for ideas, and, Duke affirmative action for teachers of ideas -- both for the purpose of meeting the criteria of race, gender, and class." She asks, "What is the point of a higher education if it is not to elevate us above the mundane, to release us from the bonds that may otherwise confine and 'determine' us?" In my judgment, such

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statements give carte blanche (with rare exceptions) to academic bigots, sexists, and intellectual snobs -- those who, with a smidgen of highly specialized knowledge, presume to "know it all" and to know it for "all people" as well as for "all time." Himmelfarb echoes the oft' cited comment of Matthew Arnold that to be educated, or cultured, one must be exposed to "the best which has been thought and said in the world."[1] For many, it appears that this dictum holds only when "the best" is written or translated into English, the authors are not too "foreign" in their thoughts, and it does not include the "thoughts" of women. The questions raised by this statement and its narrow view of texts and contexts has prompted me to question the grounds on which some ideas are judged "worthy" and "intellectual" and others are not.

Consciousness and Category Construction

"Feminist consciousness," Bartky (1981) observes, "is often afflicted with category confusion -- an inability to know how to classify things" (p. 29). She offers a phenomenological account of the changes in consciousness experienced as a result of feminist transformation, or "consciouusness raising." She lays out a "morphology of feminist consciousness" and identifies some of the structural features of that altered way of apprehending oneself and the world. Feminists are alert to the sexist dimension of contemporary life which generates anger at the duplicity inherent in social reality. This duplicity, I will

argue, has a basis in our experience of two realities, one a "private sphere" reality and the other a "public sphere" reality. As I hope to show, implications of this dual perspective need to be addressed by women scholars in every discipline. Bartky says:

> feminist consciousness is the consciousness of being radically alienated from her world and often divided against herself, a being who sees herself as victim and whose victimization determines her being-in-the-world as resistance, wariness, and suspicion. Raw and exposed much of the time, she suffers from ontological shock. (1981, p. 32)

That ontological shock has yet to subside! To re-examine our thought categories requires that we return to the bedrock of our cherished Western cultural tradition -- the classical philosophical texts. Skinner (1987) finds androcentrism crystallized in its purest form in classical studies (p.181). Furthermore, the controlling paradigms and tacit assumptions of the "classics profession" influence the kind of knowledge its members produce. Once the basis for a liberal education, classics has become "the ultimate 'marginal' discipline" (ibid).[2] The accurate reconstruction of the "classical" past presents a poignant challenge to the feminist scholar since its raison d'etre is the reproduction of the texts on which patriarchy rests. The main propositions of the patriarchal tradition trace their origin to the classics. Under patriarchy, the received classical texts support both traditionalism and elitism. As Skinner observes, "Ancient texts reinforce hidden prejudices already implanted in the individual student by his or her background" (p. 183). Feminist readings of classical texts have

begun to deconstruct patriarchal interpretations that have been reproduced over the centuries.

Schuster and Van Dyne (1985) state that, "To be a knower at this point in the history of women's studies means to push thought as far as it will go" (p. 172). That is what I propose to do from the perspective of Home Economics -- a "woman's discipline" -- that stands outside the patriarchal paradigm. Home Economics for me has been enormously enriched by feminist theory and the new scholarship on women. The project on which I have embarked has taken me back to the pre-Socratic mindset of the ancient Greeks to argue for an alternative perspective that I call "Hestian feminism" (Thompson, 1988). It stems from my work as a feminist home economist for whom there is no contradiction in the two terms. Women scholars do not simply have to take the disciplines defined by patriarchy and turn them inside-out or upside-down. We have to take them apart -- deconstruct them as we would an ill-fitting garment -- and put them together in new ways that fit us properly.[3]

Oikos and Polis: Two Spheres Revisited

Political theorist Jean Bethke Elshtain critiqued the patriarchal political tradition that began with Plato. She says:

> For Plato, women are "silenced": he argued that the private speech of the household, the speech of women, lacked either the form of philosophic argumentation or the form of poetry. It was, therefore, without meaning-- unformed, chaotic, evanescent, the speech of doxa (mere opinion, not truth). Household speech could be neither heroic -- nor part of the philosophic male quest for wisdom through a dialogue of a particular

> kind. The women of Plato's time were not only excluded from politics but also debarred from participating in the process of becoming what Plato meant by a "good" human being -- a process that required a special speech for truth within the all-male forum for philosophical discourse, pedagogy, and intimacy that is the mise en scene for the Platonic dialogues. (1982, p. 606)

It must be remembered that slaves and servants (of either sex) as well as women were excluded from the realm of public discourse and the search for "Truth." Aristotle in the Politics (Book I, Chapter 2) claims that the appropriate domain for "humans," i.e. free males, is the polis, the public sphere of the emerging city-state. The polis was the domain of politics. Gods and beasts had no need for the civilizing, "humanizing," influence of politics as it developed in the polis. Left in the shadows was the oikos, the household that was organized to meet the mundane needs of human beings, needs deemed contingent, and therefore of less importance since, it was argued, they sustained the body rather than the mind. The polis and "politics" became the universal social referent, and the oikos and "domestics" -- called oikonomeia, or "household economy" -- was thrust into the conceptual netherworld. Thus began the "two spheres" phenomenon that has occupied much of the recent discourse on women. I find it problematic to accept the notion of a devalued "private sphere" (inhabited by women, men, and children and largely in the control of women) and a valued "public sphere" (inhabited by and largely controlled by men). This conceptualization is inadequate for the study of the myriad mundane events that make up a human life. It does not follow that because we accept "necessity" as

an ineluctable component of human existence that it leads to blind determinism. The "two spheres" (as I see them) are equally important systems of human action, each grounded in its own "space." One is grounded in the familiar world of the polis of political economy. The other is grounded just as securely in the oikos of domestic economy. I am proposing a conceptual shift away from the notion of dual spheres tightly boundaried by gender toward spaces occupied for different purposes with systems organized to achieve them. This semantic shift is conceptually necessary to escape reductionist partriarchal categories of thought that name one a "man's world" and the other a "woman's world."

In ancient Greece the public space of the polis was separated from the private space of the oikos by markers, called "herms," which were phallic symbols that designated the public territory as "male." The herms were sacred to Hermes (Roman Mercury) the Greek messenger god. The oikos, the site of oikonomeia or "household management," included the outlying land and buildings that provided for the household's needs. The sacred center of the oikos was the hearth and the hearthfire, both called Hestia (Roman Vesta). Hestia was the goddess of "hearth and home." While Hermes protected the activities of strangers in public spaces, Hestia protected the activities of a household lineage or group, including its friends, slaves, and servants. Of the two deities, Hestia was the more powerful.

According to Neumann:

> at the center of the mysteries over which the female group presided stood the guarding and tending of the fire. As in the home round about, female domination is symbolized in its center, the fireplace, the seat of warmth and food preparation, the 'hearth,' which is also the original altar. (p. 284)

Thus reverence for Hestia was the source of the sacred in the modern sense.

The oikos was a human habitat, a life support system, or "ecosystem," that met its inhabitants' needs for food, shelter, clothing, child care, and human connection. These needs can be met at many different levels. The oikos was autarkic, i.e. economically self-sufficient. The oikos gave the individual her/his personal location on earth while social status was identified with citizenship in the polis, i.e. Athenian, Ionian, or Spartan.

I believe that awareness of these dual systems of human action, one essential for security and continuity of the private world (or Hestian domain), and the other essential for security and continuity of the larger social body (or Hermean domain), is needed to carry the feminist project beyond gender. It introduces a standpoint that accounts for persons of both sexes in both domains. (See Figure 1) The Hestian/Hermean domains are not (like Rorschach ink blots) "mirror images" of one another. They are not each other "in reverse." They exist <u>in relation</u>. Neither can exist without the other. They are complementary and interdependent. While the two systems exist to serve different purposes, both are embedded in the larger, planetary environment

through complex transactions and feedback loops. The Hestian world is an invisible world, never fully revealed. It is a world continually in proccess of becoming. It is what Goux (1983) calls "the place of Being." The Hermean world is visible and tangible. It is the place of Acting.

The Greeks assumed that slaves and women -- having no "minds" -- could perform the functions necessary for day-by-day survival. This social arrangement gave the "free" males of the polis their freedom at the cost of the "unfreedom" of others in the oikos. That mindset persists to the modern age, a premise of the patriarchal texts that form the foundation of the curriculum and are re-presented generation after generation for re-interpretation by other patriarchal minds -- some of them in women's bodies!

The acceptance of a body/mind dualism (as much as gender dichotomies) which pervades the traditional university, places an intellectual straitjacket on Western thought and action. Many academics unconsciously accept the categories implicit in such flawed thinking. To the extent that feminism builds its edifice on the same shaky intellectual ground as patriarchy, it is in jeopardy. But if we press our case beyond gender, to a new paradigm of dual systems, we can avoid the "mind traps" laid down in past time by patriarchy.

For us to see the Hestian/Hermean relation, we need new conceptual lenses -- one ground anew to bring the Hestian domain into focus that will balance the lens ground by patriarchy which

brings the Hermean domain into focus. Unless we do this, we will continue our astigmatic, split vision of social reality, an astigmatism imposed by the very system we challenge. We need to break through the illusion that there is a single reality and that somehow we are misfits in a single, patriarchally defined reality. (See Figure 2)

Consider what happens when we look at an M.C. Escher print. The mind is drawn first to one set of shapes and then to another. They share a common boundary. In systems terms, they interface. There is neither "foreground" nor "background" in the conventional sense. There is neither "higher" nor "lower," "superior" nor "inferior," as there are in the traditional patriarchal, hierarchical mode of thought. Instead, each shape and space is part of the other. They interpenetrate. They form each other's boundaries. We almost never grasp the two perspectives at the same time, yet they are both "there," in the picture. Similarly, the Hestian/Hermean systems exist simultaneously -- but in different spaces. They exist not in isolation but in dialectical relation. They are interdependent, interconnected, and interactive. They must maintain dynamic equilibrium or become entropic. In my view, the Hermean world is entropic. It uses resources (human and material), but it does not produce replacements. It uses its power to coerce others in the Hestian domain to produce them. The Hestian world is counterentropic when it engages in reproductive functions. This theoretical perspective enables us to distinguish between what is

biologically given as "female" and "male," what is culturally constructed as "masculine" and "feminine," and what constitutes a new perspective named "Hestian" and "Hermean" that can be shared by both women and men.

Split Vision and Split Consciousness

We can look at some feminist writing from this new perspective. Stanley and Wise (1983) argue that "women's experiences" constitute a different view of reality. They write:

> we find that the idea that there is <u>one</u> true objective social reality existing for all people quite unacceptable. We are perfectly ready to accept that all people operate on the <u>assumption</u> that there is an objective social reality....What we reject is that this "reality" is the same for everybody -- or should be the same for everybody if only they weren't falsely conscious. (p.119)

They continue:

> Different states of consciousness aren't just different ways of <u>interpreting</u> the social world. We don't accept that there is something <u>really</u> there for these to be interpretations of. Our differing states of consciousness lead us into constructing different social worlds. (p. 130.)

I would say that Hestian/Hermean consciousness constitutes a different ontology or way of making sense of our world. Perhaps the Hestian/Hermean perspective can correct the false consciousness inherent in the denial of the material basis essential for human life. Each of us possesses the potential for both a Hestian and a Hermean form of consciousness that, when properly understood, helps to disclose the sources of our ambivalence, tension, and anger.

If women -- or at least some women (and possibly even some men) -- experience a "different reality," a problem arises when they seek to communicate that reality to others. Then follows the near impossibility of "legitimizing" or "universalizing" their experience as fully "human" in the same way elite males have been able to do. This, more than any argument emphasizing "sexual separatism," constitutes the dilemma for feminists today. Any attempt to universalize on the basis of female experience may be interpreted by males as attempts to "feminize" them. Even the polymorphously perverse philosophers of the Symposia were insulted to be called "womanly!" Acceptance of the classical canon, such as Himmelfarb suggests, is not seen as an attempt to "masculinize" but rather as a strategy to emphasize our "full humanity." As feminists, we must take the next bold step and carry the argument "beyond gender" into a new discourse territory that recognizes the Hestian/Hermean orientations toward human experience. Otherwise, how do we account for women, like Himmelfarb and others, who do enjoy voice and visibility within the University but who would never identify themselves as "feminist?"

Males hold a monopoly on the semantic and semiotic structures that codify language and meaning in the Hermean world. In the past, women have not been privileged to construct their own meanings, nor have they possessed a language with which to name their own experience (Spender, 1980). Even when and if they do this within a "female culture" (and feminism, women's

studies, and home economics can be so labeled) they are unable to legitimate their meanings in the Hermean society controlled by men and by women with a patriarchal mind-set.

The Hestian Archetype

Psychologist Jean Baker Miller observes that society does not regard most so-called "women's work" as "real activity" because it is associated with others' development rather than self-enhancement or self-employment (1975, p. 53). She says:

> in the course of projecting into woman's domain some of its most troublesome and problematic exigencies, male-led society may also have simultaneously, and unwittingly, delegated to women not humanity's 'lowest needs' but its 'highest necessities' -- that is, the intense emotionally connected cooperation and creativity necessary for human life and growth. (p. 25)

It is not hard to see that what Baker is describing here is "Hestian work." Hestian work is at once ethical and humanly important, the work that evokes the "different voice" that Gilligan discerns in the moral judgment of females.

Elshtain is delineating the Hestian/Hermean tension women experience when she says that the end point of the feminist argumentation .... requires that women, in the name of feminism, embrace the terms of public (i.e., Hermean) life that was created by men who had rejected or devalued the (Hestian) world of the traditionally 'feminine' and its 'softer' virtues (1982, p. 447). The substitution of Hestian/Hermean for private/public and

Hestian/Hermean for "feminine" and "masculine" puts Elshtain's observations in a different light.

It seems to me arguments in terms of gender founder because gender is not the clear-cut binary category many assume it to be. It is, rather, a fluid human continuum with many permutations. Moreover, to use Jungian psychological terms, both sexes possess a Hestian anima and a Hermean animus. The anima/animus can also be expressed as Hestian/Hermean archetypes, so that a new world of interpretation and meaning can be disclosed by a re-vision of outdated conceptual categories.

The Hestian archetype is the self-defined female essence. Psychologically, it represents personal centering, reflection, and close attention to enduring and timeless human qualities. Independent and self-defined, Hestia's influence extends to a principle of ordering, located in the oikos and in oekonomeia, which is related to cyclical time. The ordering of personal space is fundamental to what we call mental health, to the person with an integrated, self-actualizing personality. As a feminist archetype, Hestia suggests self-sufficiency and completeness -- a "female" self that does not require a "male" signifier to bestow identity. It is a representation of female integrity.

Recently, Brod (1987) attempted to situate "men's studies" in the context of "women's studies." He argues that "men's studies," with its distinctive "feminist" approach, is a necessary complement to women's studies (p. 179). The appropriation of a revised gender perspective by males leaves the

way open for ideological and curricular co-optation. Brod is putting the same old patriarchal wine in what he mistakenly takes to be feminist bottles. The new "gender scholarship" is used to justify the project of "men's studies." There seems to me to be something decidedly "sinister" in this project. Unless we "break free" and go beyond gender, we will end up with ever-new versions of the "war of the sexes" and the querelle des femmes.

Language: The First and Last Word

We must agree with Elaine Marx on the primary structuring role of language. In her view:

> The principal methodology of post-structuralism is deconstruction: to split the binary pair (masculine/feminine; active/passive; sun/moon) and show one term inhabiting the other; to show inconsistencies in major arguments through attention to detail; to locate the inevitable blind spot hiding within crucial metaphors; to contextualize both within the individual texts and by placing the individual text in relation to other texts of the same period but of different genres, or in relation to intertexts that both precede and follow. (Marx, 1985, p. 174)

The Hestian/Hermean metaphor resolves this dilemma. However, even if and when women find their "voice," they still confront the inattentiveness of the "blind eye" and "deaf ear" that often ignore their messages. Cixous (1976) has said:

> Every woman has known the torment of getting up to speak. Her heart racing, at times entirely lost for words, ground and language slipping away -- that's how daring a feat, how great a transgression it is for a woman to speak -- even just open her mouth -- in public. A double distress, for even if she transgresses, her words fall almost always upon the deaf male ear, which hears in language only that which speaks of the masculine. (Signs Reader, 1983, pp. 284-285)

The Hermean language used to present "facts" has pushed human thought along certain avenues and treated others as side streets or dead ends, not even worth exploring. Has our entire cultural history been based on a two-valued logic in which both sides of the syllogism are patriarchally defined? This is a lopsided logic at best, which treats two sides of the same coin as though they were different coins. I challenge the assumption of "rationality." What is rational about an argument when the "two sides" of any question are grounded in the same Hermean assumptions?

If, as Schuster and Van Dyne note, the feminist project is not merely to add data to the existing male-defined body of knowledge, but to revise paradigms in all the disciplines of the curriculum, we must re-think and re-vision all the Hermean assumptions that have infiltrated feminist thinking. The role of reading and the hegemony of text and textual interpretation has been challenged by feminist linguists and literary critics who see the link between sexuality and textuality, between eros and logos. Feminists in all disciplines can now begin to deconstruct our Hermean (patriarchal, masculist, phallocentric) biases to name our Hestian domain and claim our voices as Hestian/Hermean, as the situation demands. (See Figure 3)

Linear Logic vs. Systems Thinking

The method of linear, binary logic undergirds the androcentric emphasis of classical texts. To break out of

androcentric thought patterns and delimiting modes of "rationalist" thought, we may turn to the gender-neutral language of systems thinking. To continue to argue the case for feminism with the tools used to support patriarchy seems futile. As noted by Cixous:

> If woman has always functioned "within" the discourse of man, a signifier that has always referred back to the opposite signifier which annihilates its specific energy and diminishes or stifles its very different sounds, it is time for her to dislocate this "within," to explode it, turn it around, and seize it; to make it hers, containing it, taking it in her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of. (Signs Reader, 1976, p. 291)

Proposing the Hestian/Hermean paradigm is my response to the charge laid out by Cixous. It enables us to get inside language and provides a language to disclose "inside" and "outside" in a new way. The model provides a language to free us from the limitations of partriarchal categories. While genitalia are the most obvious marks of human difference, women do not think with their internalized ovaries as much as males think with their externalized testes. Both males and females think with their brains! How, then, does one break out of thought categories that assume not only a binary but a hierarchical relation? Linear, logical thought processes, the hallmarks of "rationality," are not equal to the task. Current research in the cognitive sciences suggests that such processes do not utilize the brain's full capacity. If the two cerebral hemispheres are specialized for different kinds of information processing, I am tempted to say that the right hemisphere

supports a Hestian and the left hemisphere a Hermean mode of information processing.

Systems thinking is one methodology available to address the problem of simultaneity and of multiple realities. When one is pulled in two directions -- toward the Hestian and toward the Hermean modes -- systems thinking can help. Systems thinking identifies processes as goal-oriented and provides a standpoint that accommodates two independently operating intellectual approaches. The self can be conceptualized as a system. So can the family. And so can "society." But a binocular conceptualization of human action as two interpenetrating domains with individuals operating in both is simplified by adopting systems thinking. Admittedly, not everyone is comfortable with the formal language of systems discourse ("input," "output," and "feedback,") and, as used by laypersons, it is often both confusing and definitionally inaccurate. Systems operate at the collective, aggregate level. They are composed of interdependent, interconnected, interactive parts that exist for the attainment of specific goals. Systems language clarifies problems of relation better than does formal or symbolic logic. It permits a holistic perspective.

The New Scholarship and the Old University

Aiken et al. (1988) remind us of woman's place in the traditional androcentric canons and curricula and about the possibilities of what Adrienne Rich called the "re-vision" of

these structures. Our project is not to re-vise -- i.e. to put into a new "tight hold" -- but to re-vision, to see anew what so many take as "given." As we engage in dialogue in the Hestian/Hermean discourse model, we must remember that:

> historically, even before the existence of universities as formal institutions, women in Western culture were largely prohibited from active participation -- not to mention leadership -- in most public spheres, whether political, economic, legal, educational, or even religious, given the pervasive influence of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, with its male priestly castes and its predominantly androcentric Scriptures. (Indeed) women were generally excluded from the realms where public discourse among men shaped what we have inherited and what our universities have institutionalized as the Western cultural tradition. (Aiken et al., 1988, p. xii)

In this tradition, the agentic female was a rarity, and women were located socially in relation to men -- as mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, mistresses. They were marginal, secondary, or derivative figures with no "space" of their own. They existed "outside" the "traditions" of male defined secular scripts and sacred scriptures.

Schuster and Van Dyne observe that for the first time in history women represent the majority of the college population (1985 p. 3). One would think that this demographic shift would represent a "window of opportunity" for the new scholarship on women. Not so! Instead, as Himmelfarb demonstrates, there is resistance to any major transformation of higher education that might challenge its Hermean structure.

Langer (1984) observes:

> Rooted in the medieval university and for centuries shaped by male definitions of what constitutes legitimate intellectual inquiry, the modern academy unsurprisingly continues to reflect masculine bias. While the intellectual capacity of contemporary women is generally acknowledged, the legitimate exercise of that capacity has been defined and limited to those areas certified as valid by male practitioners of the past. Sanctions are enforced through administrative rules that grant or withhold status on the basis of scholarly criteria. "Scholarly" in this sense, however, carries both descriptive and commendatory meanings. Applied to a process of methodological investigation as rigorous inquiry and rational ordering of information, it describes fact; but used to direct the proper focus of such activities or judge the significance of their findings, it conveys approval or disapproval of the subject itself as a legitimate object of investigation. (In Fowlkes and McClure, pp. 85-86.)

This Hermean mind-set leads to a position shared by women like Professor Himmelfarb that can lead others either to defensiveness or to advocating a different standard to evaluate the work of women. The different standard, I submit, is a Hestian standard.

The structure of the disciplines was the foundation on which the medieval university rested. The curriculum, as organized and elaborated, was essentially a course of study for males seeking entrance to the rapidly changing Hermean world of the Middle Ages and later the Renaissance. It became the model for university life as Cardinal Newman reflected on it in <u>The Idea of a University</u> (1873):

> What an empire is in political history, such is a university in the sphere of philosophy and research. It is, as I have said, the high protecting power of all knowledge and science, of fact and principle, of inquiry and discovery, of experiment and speculation; it maps out the territory of the intellect, and sees that the boundaries of each province are religiously respected,

> and that there is neither encroachment nor surrender on any side. It acts as umpire between truth and truth, and, taking into account the nature and importance of each, assigns to all their due order of precedence. It maintains no one department of thought exclusively, however ample and noble; and it sacrifices none. It is deferential and loyal, according to their respective weight, to the claims of literature, of physical research, of history, of metaphysics, of theological science. It is impartial towards them all, and promotes each in its own place and for its own object. (p. 415)

For some, Newman's image remains the ideal -- but an ideal that is becoming both elusive and illusory. There is no question that Newman's is a Hermean ideal. What would Newman have to say about Women's Studies or Home Economics?

According to Schuster and Van Dyne,

> Women's studies has enabled us to see in all areas what we've come to call the "invisible paradigms" of the academic system and the larger cultural context that marginalize or trivialize the lives of all women, the lives of blacks and ethnic minorities, and those outside the dominant class or culture. Invisible paradigms are the skeletons in the closet of even the most liberal institution or, to use another image, to make the invisible visible, the infrastructure of our academic system. (p. 7)

The Hestian/Hermean metaphor allows us to develop a feminist paradigm that brings this hidden infrastructure to light. In fact, the modern university is the visible evidence of a complex set of Hermean assumptions, Hermean agreements, the Hermean contracts that all participants in the political process of higher education have agreed to, usually unconsciously, to bring about learning -- or at least a Hermean version of learning that perpetuates patriarchal paradigms. The diploma, the symbolic evidence of a degree attained, is written in a language that

attests to the power of a patriarchal elite. Degrees are accorded "by the power vested in" the University by the dominant Hermean institution of the State. A Hermean ideology, supported by patriarchy, pervades the academy. The patriarchal academy is shored up by political power that is often at cross purposes with Hestian interests.

Heidegger: A Case Study of the Hestian/Hermean

The tension between Hestian/Hermean orientations to university life is clear in the life and thought of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). In addressing the question of "Being" in the modern world (Sein und Zeit/Being and Time, 1927), Heidegger sought to reinterpret the spiritual essence of Being for the modern age. Heidegger's support for Nazi ideology is the focus of much recent scholarship.

In his inaugural address as Rector Magnificus of Freiburg University (May 27, 1933), Heidegger declared that the "essence" of a university is the "will to knowledge," which he identified with the emerging Nazi party. He stated paradoxically that this was to occur within a spirituality "that is the power to preserve, in the deepest way, the strengths (of the Volk) which are rooted in soil and blood" (Citations omitted, Sheehan, 1988, p. 39). To accomplish this goal, Heidegger claimed, required a return to the pre-Socratic origins of thought. I would argue that feminist thinking must also return to the pre-Socratics. Not just to recover the Goddesses as symbols and as sources of

ritual, but to reclaim the meaning of the rituals and the essence of being and thinking of those women who observed and preserved them. For me, such a recovery discloses the need to reclaim the "invisible goddess," Hestia. Goux (1983) draws the image of the "imageless" goddess as the "place of Being" and draws parallels with Heideggerian thought. Hestia represents an inviolable presence or principle (hence "virginal" in patriarchal language), the very essence of spirituality, not sexuality. Hestia's ordering principle animated the spirit or soul of the collective subject -- the private family of the oikos as well as the "citizens" of the polis. In the Greek mind, homage to Hestia created a "frame of reverence" that assured a proper relationship both with the gods and with fellow human beings. This notion of a higher order of femininity requires of the Hestian votary the "proper spirit." It is from the deepest recesses of human being that proper action is directed. Goux compares the Greek attempt to apprehend the source of divinity with Heidegger's interest in the essence of human being, a humanity that had been progressively lost with the rise of the depersonalized polis, the modern State. According to Goux, "Without a true access to Hestia, analysis can have no end. The analytic exercise opens ... onto this internal focus which also serves to guarantee a link with Being as permanence and stability ..." (Goux, p. 105). Despite his wrestling with issues that have their origin in the Hestian/Hermean split in consciousness, Heidegger effectively ended academic freedom at Freiburg when he was appointed the

University's Fuhrer in 1933. Hermes triumphed over Hestia. Perhaps we can find in this a cautionary tale for CUNY.

Conclusions

Some women scholars in the male defined disciplines have a Hermean orientation, and some male scholars have a Hestian orientation. By and large, the University has become a Hermean domain. Women's studies acknowledges the significance of the seen/unseen, the said/unsaid, the written/unwritten. Typically, women scholars have had to read "between the lines" of Hermean texts to discern a Hestian message. Collectively, many women scholars are making Hestian statements. But so are some men. Those who simply repeat the "received wisdom" of the past, who advocate a canon that excludes more than half of humanity, wittingly or not, support the Hermean orientation of patriarchy which is more concerned with power and domination than with empowerment through education.

Many women scholars sense the perplexing neglect of the Hestian domain. The model proposed here can help us sort through the disciplines and detect those aspects which we consider Hestian and those we identify as Hermean. (Indeed, Himmelfarb appears Hermean. Rosalind Rosenberg appears Hermean, and Alice Kessler-Harris appears Hestian in their differing interpretation of data in the Sears case.) When Home Economics was founded in the early 19th century, a group of women and men, confronted with the rapidly proliferating knowledge generated by science and its

accompanying technologies, asked: How does the new knowledge fit together? How does it all connect? How can it be made more meaningful? How can it be disseminated in ways that improve the quality of life? I characterize this a Hestian orientation and, as such, I believe the perspective has a place in women's studies today.

Jensen (1988) argues that the major goal of mainstreaming the new feminist scholarship into American universities is to incorporate material by and about women into the normal course of higher education. He makes the point that, whether by intent or not, the consequence of such mainstreaming would be that males can come to better understand themselves, since "it is through the study of women that males can come to understand the constraints shaping their own choices, the basis for their fears, and the prospects for alternative futures" (p. 78). He later says that "Concepts such as rationality, objectivity, and justice all have positive connotations, that is we (sic) tend to view them (sic) as 'good,' as something to be valued, as traits to be encouraged for the benefit of human progress...." (p. 86). Even a well-meaning male academic sociologist, whose essay appears in a volume edited by women, does not recognize the range of presuppositions and assumptions that make his "feminist" perspective Hermean and at odds with Hestian aspects of the human condition.

There are both human and institutional factors involved in the inevitable challenges to the Hermean territories men call

"disciplines." A major challenge posed by the new scholarship is the question of the institutional boundaries demarcating the disciplines of knowledge which have become politicized so that discussions of curriculum are reduced to "turf" wars. At this particular historical moment, transforming Hermean structures to incorporate the Hestian insights of feminist, nonracist, nonelitist, scholarship and pedagogy is especially difficult. Schuster and Van Dyne refer to "intellectual and structural provincialism" as obstacles to change. The Hermean structure of the university is especially resistant to change. And some women, as does Professor Himmelfarb, support this Hermean view. Clearly we need a paradigm that goes <u>beyond</u> gender, race, and class to explain this.

Gender imbalance poses a threat to some of the most sacred and unchallenged assumptions of the patriarchy: that scholarship is neutral, that women (to become equal) must have equal access to an education historically meshed with patriarchal interests and ideology. The feminist project of reconceptualizing the disciplines will inevitably change the Hermean structure of the University. Is the current structure of the University patriarchy's "last stand?" In some respects, I believe it is. I hope it is!

NOTES

(1.) A symposium on "the Humanities and the Public Interest" at Yale University's Whitney Humanities Center on April 5, 1986 originated in large part from Secretary of Education William Bennett's 1984 report, To Reclaim a Legacy. The participants, in varying degrees, also subscribed to Arnold's canon. Jonathan Culler urged that the humanities teach diversity with the goal of understanding "otherness." No women's voices appear among the excerpts. But Culler's voice might be considered "Hestian." See Yale Journal of Criticism 1:1 (Fall, 1987), p. 217.

(2.) In the early history of American education -- in the "academies" and the "colleges" -- familiarity with the classics marked the educated mind. Women, by and large, were excluded from such study, although some obtained it second-hand from brothers or indulgent fathers. It would seem self-evident that women, confronting patriarchal texts and aware of their own exclusion from the formal education available to men -- might read the texts with themselves as "subject." To a woman reading classic texts and internalizing their propositions as "universals," certain questions inevitably come to mind. If such insight did not produce public transformations, it produced private adaptations in the form of personal names, modes of dress

and household furnishings, architectural styles, and objects d'art, i.e. new "tastes" and "fashions." For 19th century women, these things, which evoked the classical period, became matters of "refinement" or "culture." But such outward symbols also expressed an inward vision. We should not dismiss 19th century women's contacts with classical subjects as superficial because we can only discern their superficial evidence. Women's thoughts and collective consciousness in the 18th and 19th centuries were undoubtedly affected as well. The values and concerns that lie hidden in thought may have no means of expression other than those outlets that are socially sanctioned -- such as the household arts that provide men with "creature comforts" and the outward symbols of material success that symbolize their status in the public world.

While the patriarchal organization of higher education in the men's colleges paid lip service to the classics, as higher education became more egalitarian, the classics were subordinated to more "worldly" offerings -- such as economics and political science -- that would be likely to have a benefit in the free enterprise system of a rapidly-growing representative democracy. A critical reading of patriarchal texts by women would raise certain fundamental questions which were both unasked and unanswered until educated women and empathetic men raised them. I believe this must lead to a re-reading of some of the texts

of the "cult of domesticity" and the "cult of true womanhood," using a "Hestian hermeneutic" (Thompson, 1986d).

(3.) In 1902, Home Economics was defined "in its most comprehensive sense as the study of the laws, conditions, principles and ideals which are concerned on the one hand with man's (sic) immediate physical environment and on the other hand with his nature as a social being, and is the study specially of the relation between these factors." (Cited in Costantakos, p. 185). They believed that to form a complete definition, "it may be possible to consider Home Economics as a philosophical subject, i.e. a study of relation ... between certain phases of man's (sic) nature.... something to connect and bind together into a consistent whole the pieces of knowledge at present unrelated. Such a binding together is what is meant by Home Economics" (Costantakos, p. 186. Citing Fourth Lake Placid Conference, 1902, pp. 70-71). It seems clear that this group of educators, laymen, and scholars were attempting to lay out a discipline of relation among variables that would connect facts and information. They were transforming the liberal arts curriculum. Their goal was not unlike that confronted by feminist scholars and theorists today. In the context of the times, the new field of Home Economics was to take as its province the knowledge needed by individuals and

families for the efficient management of households and the prudent use of human and material resources.

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FIGURE 1

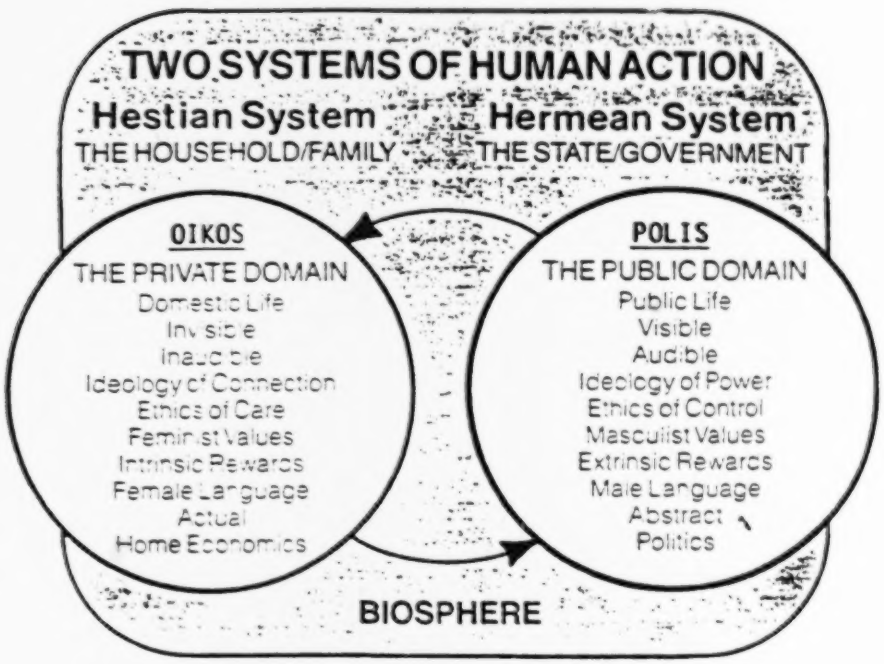
TWO SYSTEMS OF HUMAN ACTION
Hestian System
THE HOUSEHOLD/FAMILY
Hermean System
THE STATE/GOVERNMENT
OIKOS
THE PRIVATE DOMAIN
Domestic Life
Invisible
Inaudible
Ideology of Connection
Ethics of Care
Feminist Values
Intrinsic Rewards
Female Language
Actual
Home Economics
POLIS
THE PUBLIC DOMAIN
Public Life
Visible
Audible
Ideology of Power
Ethics of Control
Masculist Values
Extrinsic Rewards
Male Language
Abstract
Politics
BIOSPHERE

Figure 2

THE HESTIAN/HERMEAN MODE

HESTIAN	HERMEAN
OIKOS	**POLIS**
Private Sphere	Public Sphere
Domestic Life	Civic Life
Invisible	Visible
Feminist	Masculist
Intrinsic reward	Extrinsic reward
Status-in-connection	Status-in-domination
Intuition	Cognition
Right Hemisphere	Left Hemisphere
Ethics of care	Ethics of justice
Personal	Impersonal
Necessary knowledge	Expedient knowledge

Figure 3

HESTIAN/HERMEAN LANGUAGE

Truth
Beauty
Virtue
Knowledge
Technology
Science
Power
Freedom
Ethics
Esthetics
Courage
Education
Philosophy
Profession
Vocation

Each of these words can be deconstructed to reveal a Hestian/Hermean meaning.